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ABSTRACT

Twenty-one fourth-year college students of Mexican-American ancestry attending the University of Arizona were interviewed to determine the unique qualities contributing to the students' persistence. The study used empowerment as its organizing model and identified institutional factors contributing to student success and persistence. Institutional factors reviewed include academic preparation, use of available student services, student/instructor interaction, and academic experiences. Among the findings were the following: financial aid and its bureaucratic processes represented a threat to students; a communal approach to family finances was typical; students reported confusion about their career options after graduation; and, minority programs were important to women students, while male students used services available to all students. Includes 47 references. (JDD)

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Descubriendo el Sueno: Programming for Success

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Descubriendo el Sueno:
Programming for Success

Hispanic students represent an increasing percentage of the total college population, their enrollments have shown steady growth since 1984 when they represented 4.4% of all college enrollments (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1986). In spite of this growth Hispanic students, and Mexican Americans in particular, remain under-represented at all levels of higher education (Astin, 1975; Commission on the Higher Education of Minorities, 1982; Haro, 1983; Lopez, Madrid-Barela, & Macias, 1976; Olivas, 1978; University of California, 1975).

It is difficult to obtain statistics specifically for Mexican-American demographics or educational attainment. Much of the research uses the umbrella categories of "Hispanic," "Spanish-speaking," or "Spanish-surnamed." These labels include those of Cuban, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Central and South American, Filipino, Indian, and Mexican descent. The social, educational, economic, and cultural experiences of these groups vary widely. Nationally, about 60% of this group is of Mexican origin. Statistics from the southwestern states are easier to interpret because in this region 86% of the Hispanic population is of Mexican descent (Alston, 1985). This study focuses upon students of Hispanic ancestry in the southwest. The generic term "Hispanic" is not an adequate descriptor for this population. As already mentioned, there are many groups of Hispanic ancestry who are not represented in large numbers in the southwest or in this study. The population addressed by this study are those the U.S. Census (1987) refers to as "Hispanics of Mexican Origin," people who have traditionally been referred to as Mexican-American.

The reasons underlying the ability of a student of Mexican-American ancestry to complete a four year college degree while so many minority students drop out results from either the social and educational factors of the institution or upon the ability of the Mexican-American student to adapt to the system. The scope of the problem is enormous and the total population of Mexican-American students in urban, state supported universities across the country, for reasons previously reviewed, are difficult to access. For that reason this study limited itself to the characteristics of a small sample in order that the data required to address the problem might be more readily obtainable.

Purpose

Those who design and implement programs to increase the retention of Hispanic students must consider all factors which may influence retention rates. Institutional responsibility to these students requires awareness of appropriate explanatory models to account for factors affecting attrition before effective programs can be designed. One purpose of the study was to learn how successful Mexican American students surmount the factors contributing to Mexican American student attrition.

Sample

The setting was a large, urban, state supported, Research I university located in a metropolitan area of over 600 thousand people in the southwestern United States. In 1985, the year in which the informants first matriculated at the university, the institution had a student enrollment of 30,374, of whom there were 3680 first-time, full-time freshmen. The largest representation of any minority group were 362 Hispanics (SARETO, 1988).

A purposive sample (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) of subjects for whom the most data was available was drawn from the 1985 entering freshman class. Incoming first-time, full-time freshmen Hispanic students from the fall 1985 freshman class, 362 in total, comprised the pool of available subjects. Transfer students and students re-entering the institution after a "stop-out" period were excluded from the total. Of the total, 217 participated in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey during the 1985 fall orientation program. During the Spring semester of 1986 the university administered the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) to a sample of students. There were 47 students from the entering population of 362 hispanics for whom both the CIRP and CSEQ data were available. Since this study used concepts from the CIRP and CSEQ, these 47 form the target group. From those 47, all students who persisted were identified as they registered for their fourth successive year of study. There were 21 students in that group.

These students are survivors. They survived the odds against them. They were minority students at risk on a majority campus because they displayed the many characteristics which research has shown to contribute to attrition. This paper first addresses the method of the study and its results. Next, it explores the reasons why these students should have failed, drawing from previous research on student attrition. Third, it reviews the unique qualities contributing to these students' persistence at the University of Arizona, employing a model of student empowerment. The paper concludes with recommendations for institutions seeking to ensure hispanic students' empowerment for successful college completion.

Method

Each of the 21 students agreed to participate in the study and intensive interviews were conducted with each subject during the months of December and January. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for common themes. Content analysis of the interviews was chosen for analysis because it was necessary to use a method that would permit student strategies to emerge. Content analysis aims at a classification of a body of content in terms of a system of categories devised to yield data relevant to specific hypotheses (Berelson, 1954). Special attention was given to the indicators of social and academic integration and involvement as identified by Tinto (1975, 1987) and Astin (1984, 1985) and the meaning of those experiences to the students. The transcribed responses were sorted in as many ways

as possible and the commonalities were assigned "coding categories" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Coding means that when an interview segment contains data specific to a topic, the segment was coded to indicate that data. This was done by assigning a code to each discrete topic and all responses relating to that topic were then assigned the same code.

Emergent from the anecdotal, self-reported data were the common experiences of those Mexican-American students who persisted. Their experiences fall into two major areas — Personal Factors, and Institutional Factors. For the purpose of this discussion the themes within Personal Factors will be, largely, ignored and only the Institutional Factor themes will be reviewed in depth. The experiential themes under Institutional Factors that influenced the persistence of these students are related to their academic preparation, their use of available student services, student/instructor interaction, and their academic experiences.

The commonalities in the area of academic preparation that were reported by students included lower grades, difficulty of academic rigor, insecurity over preparation, comparing themselves to others, and a loss of self esteem. They dealt with these barriers by meeting them individually. Important to that interaction were the themes of commitment and human support noted as personal factors.

Previous research has shown that student attitudes toward service programs are important to student adjustment and persistence. A bridge program between high school and college — in this study New Start and orientation programs — appeared to be the single most important factor in student transition. After the bridge program, learning about and making connections to services occurs primarily through the informal network of satisfied student customers. As noted in the Chacon, et al. (1982) study, services available to all students are important, but men were more likely than women to avoid those intended specifically for minority students; this different use of services by gender was influenced by Self and Acculturation, as discussed earlier.

The dynamic of the student/instructor interaction is complex. Although Tinto and Astin both emphasize the importance of faculty/student contact, these students did not differentiate among faculty levels, teaching assistants, or administrators. These students indicated that any personal notice by someone in a position of respect — whether hispanic or not — has a positive influence on persistence even though many studies (Amodeo & Martin, 1982; Arce, 1978; Gutierrez, 1981; Lopez, et al, 1976; Olivas, 1978; and Rendon, 1986) have shown the particular importance of hispanic institutional role models. The presence of the Mexican American Studies program was also meaningful to students, although its impact was confused with the issue of hispanic instructors since many instructors for those classes were Hispanics. This study does not discount the importance of hispanic faculty since students

reported greater comfort with those instructors and the classes they taught, but it also reveals the importance of other hispanic professionals and personal recognition.

Student Academic Experiences differed by year in school. In the freshman and sophomore years, students' experiences emphasized adjustment to the institution, a degree of fear about the environment, and low grades. Important to their persistence was an awareness of a reason for their good or bad academic performance. Student Commitment — a personal factor and difficult to measure — appears to be a greater indicator of persistence than grades in the first two years. Also important in adjustment to the university are time management, awareness of study habits, and acceptance of the bureaucratic system. Students had to recognize and take control of their use of time and their study habits. Their experiences at the institution teach them to deal with bureaucracy, and their ability to work within its rules increases with their longevity at the school. Areas noted in the Personal Factors analysis were critical to their Academic Experiences as well; Student Commitment, Human Support and Finances all surfaced again in this area and were important to persistence.

This analysis of the institutional factors contributing to student success permits a brief profile of what "archetypal" institutional programming should encompass. That archetype would include some components of each of the following:

In their first two years students are concerned about their adjustment to the institution, the school's large size, and earning low grades. The second two years are distinguished by the students' recognition of their need for, and control of, time management and study habits. An acceptance of the bureaucratic nature of the institution takes place sometime in the second two years, yet the bureaucracy is a source of many frustrations that contribute to the students' academic and financial aid problems.

Regardless of high school success, academic preparation may be inadequate or students may experience adjustment problems which make them feel unprepared. However, summer bridge programs help orient students to the school and ease transition as do other available services. It is important to communicate with students about available programs, and the informal network of students satisfied with services is the best source of information. Tutoring, academic advising, peer advising, and drop-in centers also ease the transition from high school to college while career information, placement and counseling services are important for the students to learn of options and plan career paths. Hispanic men and women use different services; those for minority students will have a greater use by the women. Hispanic role models in both instructional and administrative positions are important, but most critical to students is personal recognition. Mexican American Studies programs and Spanish classes can be important in introducing "experiential relevance" and "cultural literacy" for hispanic students (Anderson, 1986; Haro, 1983).

Institutional Influences on Failure

Institutional indifference to Hispanics is a major barrier (Astin and Burciaga, 1981; Baeza, 1980; CHEM, 1982; Cross, 1974; de los Santos, 1980; Reyes, 1977; the University of California, 1975) and the school environment is influential in determining achievement (Ballesteros, 1986). These students reported feeling ignored by the institution and emphasized the importance of personal recognition. Curriculum at all levels affects Mexican-American education (Carter, 1986; Haro, 1983; Zarate, 1983) and if it ignores hispanic history and culture, it is detrimental to Mexican-American students' academic integration (Arce, 1978). Research related to the Mexican-American experience, and the establishment of Mexican-American studies programs and departments, are important to their participation in higher education (Lopez, et al., 1976). This was true for those students who chose to take classes through the Mexican American Studies or Spanish departments. Hispanic students not participating in ethnic studies programs have been found as more likely to drop out (Salas, 1981); yet not all the persisters participated in the available ethnic programs at the University of Arizona.

Hispanic dropouts frequently are uncomfortable and have difficulties with insensitive faculty (Baeza, 1980; Gutierrez, 1981; Reyes, 1977; Madrazo-Peterson & Rodriguez; 1978) and problems asking for academic assistance (Munoz, 1986). Faculty/student contact is important to retention (Amodeo & Martin, 1982; Rendon, 1986), especially hispanic faculty and administrators who serve as role models (Arce, 1978; Lopez, et al., 1976; Olivas, 1978). In this study, students confuse faculty with other authority figures, yet it is clear that personal recognition is important to their persistence.

In addition, Hispanics drop out because they do not know or understand the university bureaucracy (Leon, 1975) which was also cited as a major source of frustration for these students. Institutions that do not provide diverse support services (Hernandez, 1980) or recognize the need for different services based on gender (Chacon, et al., 1982; Hernandez, 1980; Vasquez, 1982), contribute to negative experiences and withdrawal. Summer bridge programs which promote student integration (Meyers & Dreview, 1982) were also found beneficial in this study, as were other available services like counseling, academic support and instructional programs (Ballesteros, 1986; Lopez, et al., 1976, McKinnon, 1980; Rendon, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1986). Although Chacon, et al. (1982) found Hispanic students as likely to use minority services as those available to all, this study found minority programs important to women, while the men used services available to all students.

Departure from college is presented here as more than just a personal decision. It is a result of the personal characteristics of students interacting with institutional characteristics. The dropout characteristics the students bring with them to the institution combine with the negative characteristics of the institution, and result in experiences that contribute to or cause attrition.

Empowerment

To date, most research on student attrition — especially that of Mexican Americans — have examined attrition from the standpoint of a deficit or remedial model: They attempt to determine what the students lack and then plan programs to provide it. This study, rather, used empowerment as its organizing model and sought to identify and understand the strengths of successful Mexican-American students. It examined the experiences of successful students at one institution in an attempt to learn how students overcome those personal and institutional characteristics that could have led to withdrawal.

Successful Institutional Qualities

The students identified institutional factors that contributed to their success and persistence. Regardless of the students' high school success, institutions must recognize that students may be poorly prepared academically and emotionally to adapt easily to college life and work. Summer programs to ease the transition to college help relieve this insecurity. A supportive institution will provide interventions during the first two years to assist students' adjustments to college life, the size of the institution, and possible low grades. To help prepare students for their junior and senior years, the school will provide guidance in developing better study habits and time management. Administrators must attempt to reduce bureaucracy and provide interventions for students to recognize and deal with it.

Informing students of services available is important in the delivery of services and satisfied students are the best advertising. Tutoring, academic advising, peer advising, career information, placement and counseling services and drop-in centers promote some students' success and should be provided, both because some persisters utilize them and because their omission complicates the institutional environment for a relatively fragile set of students. Differences in use of services by men and women can be anticipated, no apparent means of mitigating the males reticence has been identified. Personal attention from both instructors and administrators is critical. Important in delivering this personal recognition are hispanic role models and programs contributing to student/instructor interaction. Mexican-American Studies programs and Spanish classes affirm the ancestry and culture of hispanic students and contribute to their development of a positive identity, as well as symbolically legitimizing the institutional worth of those phenomena.

The Symbolic Interaction Interpretation

The institutional elements of students' lives described in this paper provide useful perspectives on the nature of life as a Mexican-American college student at a large research university. Additionally they offer amplifications of Tinto's and Astin's (as well as others') conceptions, and suggests steps institutions can consider to improve the campus environment for Mexican-American students. However, to "attempt insight into the frame of reference of the student himself" (Craven, 1951, p. 13), a theoretical foundation in symbolic interaction analysis was used to further examine the separate findings and to search for

important patterns of those findings – that is, to yield the "insiders's view," the meanings students themselves attached to the events of their college lives. This analytical approach to interpretation emphasizes the reciprocal influence of society and culture upon the individual. Symbolic interaction analysis emphasizes the ways individuals' interpretations mediate their experiences. Since situations, events, and interactions are intrinsically without meaning except as conferred by humans --in this case the students interviewed -- the data collection and analysis emphasized insight into the students' own experiences.

Although the experiences identified are important, to understand the persistence of Mexican-American students the personal factors providing insight into the characteristics of success must be interpreted as interacting with supportive institutional factors. Because these personal factors are non-cognitive, and largely non-demographic, their meanings are not easily assessed. Assessing the meaning of a student's "self" or of the presence of a supportive institutional environment requires a larger analytic framework that accounts for the meanings students attach to these factors. The following discussion attempts this assessment by using a symbolic interaction framework to construct patterns of meaning.

The students were not conscious of the factors contributing to their college persistence, although when asked, all were able to provide some excuse, or justification, for their persistence. They did so by constructing a meaning filtered through their interpreted experiences for any incident or set of circumstances (Rose, 1962). This interpretation of meaning has two facets: first is a psychological meaning - the meaning to the individual, which is highly subjective and personal, and second is the social meaning – the meaning to the collective. Because interpretations of meaning occurs through symbols with a learned meaning and value (Rose, 1962), the experiences of these students can be said to have meaning only through the values they have attached to symbols which they learned through their social interactions. Thus people with similar backgrounds will interpret symbols in a similar manner. This is an unconscious process: the symbols are said to "bubble up" from the individual and collective unconscious carrying shared meanings (Jung, 1964; Rose, 1962).

The findings of this study emerge from those shared meanings, but the interpretation of what the experiences symbolize to the students are less concrete. The major patterns were drawn from the findings' shared meanings, and structured into the interpretive psycho-social division of personal and institutional factors.

The Institution

A symbolic interaction interpretation of the institution reveals a powerful symbolic image. The university represents many things at many levels. Because of the complexity of the symbolism it is easier to understand what the university does not mean to the students – it does not symbolize a warm,

supportive environment. The institution, as a whole, represents a threat. The size of the institution and the lack of personal recognition does not make the students feel welcome. This overall negative imagery is reduced by pockets of support on the campus. Programs to introduce students to the institution, support services, and personal recognition become symbols of welcome, acceptance and inclusion.

Symbolic interaction interpretations, while personal, are colored by their institutional context. Students give personal interpretations to their experiences which result in action. Although the potential number of differing interpretations are endless, the actions students can take are limited by the choices the institution provides. Thus, this is where the institution can influence students' behavior.

Experiences are made powerful by the meanings and values people attach to them. A university seeking to meet Mexican-American students' needs must recognize that the commonplace policies, procedures, and papers of mundane university operations symbolize barriers to be overcome. Effective interventions to empower students to succeed can then be planned.

The University's Role in Empowering Hispanics

Fear of the unknown symbolizes the Mexican-American students' perceptions of the university. In order to provide interventions to reduce this symbolism, an institution must alter the institutional environment. Programming to enhance the personal factors of the students and build on their strengths requires that the institution become more supportive.

Personal Enhancements

One finding is clear: persisters are committed students. A strong sense of "self" supports commitment; committed students have positive self-concepts, reasonable self-expectations and accept responsibility for their actions. These personal growth characteristics are important to Mexican-American student achievement. Non-intrusive developmental exercises need to be provided to acquaint students with aspects of this internal processes.

Programs that introduce students to the institution and to other students were shown to have a strong influence in building community within the human support structure. It is clear — from their experiences — that the New Start program, and to a lesser extent the orientation program, symbolize a "welcome sign" to students. The degree of familiarity with the institution and the interaction with other students provided by these programs have immeasurable meaning to persistence. Institutional strategies should be expanded to further personalize the college entry process and to inform freshmen students of the availability of programs and services.

If the students are apprehensive because of the symbolism of the university, then it is reasonable to assume that their parents will also be intimidated by the symbol. Strategies are needed to involve the parents in the students' educational experiences so that they can develop an understanding of the challenges their children face. In this there are many possibilities for action. Options include a minority student parent program involving outreach (for example a bilingual newsletter) as well as an on-campus component (for example a parent's day/orientation).

Within the scope of financial adversity there is an apparent need for education as to the meaning of financial aid and its availability. As documented through these students' experiences, financial aid and its bureaucratic processes represent a threat to students. In understanding this perceived threat, it is important to note that four students reported using other student services for assistance with financial aid problems rather than the financial aid office. The need for assistance and understanding is more evident when the appeal process is examined. Only three students filed appeals for review of financial aid denials; five others should have appealed but did not. There is a great lack of understanding about the meaning of financial aid and its application process. Those who do not receive it often take the denial personally; it is a blow to their self-esteem. Much more education about the application and award processes needs to be done in order to reduce the negative imagery.

This study also noted a communal approach to family finances which epitomizes the Marxist philosophy of, "From each according to his ability to each according to his need" (Marx, 1980, p. 778). A symbolic interaction interpretation of communal finances would mean that financial aid represents, to students and their families, the need for assistance with educational costs and the approval of a third party for the educational goal. In addition, financial aid represents a threat, because to receive financial aid, intrusive and confusing papers regarding the family finances must be completed. To maintain financial aid, a grade level must be achieved which means students must drop classes where they are not doing well. Yet a specified number of classes must be completed, which presents the paradox of not being able to drop a class.

One possible meaning behind this communal commitment is the pride of self sufficiency. Although the family will accept the financial aid if it is available, and it will make finances easier, the family does not "need" the help. With or without financial aid there is not enough money to pay for the education and related expenses. To meet these costs, families adopt a communal commitment to expenses — family members pool funds to meet the expenses as they arise. This study finds familial support, as well as institutional supports, to be more important to student persistence than the mere presence of financial aid.

Institutional Enhancements

The introductory program to welcome and acquaint Mexican Americans to the institution provides an opportunity to transform negative symbols. Regardless of high school success, students' academic preparation may be inadequate or they may experience adjustment problems which make them feel unprepared. They must be taught to interpret actions and events in a positive light. For example, early in the semester a low grade does not a symbolize failure; instead, it is a warning. The students must learn to recognize the need and provide for time management, study skills, and quiet, nonsocial places to study. This study found that programs to assist students in understanding the reasons for their academic performance have value. Interventions to ease student insecurity about academic preparation and to reduce self-doubt are necessary. Institutions must bear in mind the concept of "proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1987) and must influence academically at-risk students who are described as "on the margin." Proximal development suggests that students develop to a certain point, the zone of proximal development, beyond which they cannot advance without collaboration. The collaboration does not have to be constant, but it must be available to help the student "at the margin" so that progression may continue until the next zone is reached.

Since nothing works as well in communicating information about services available to students as satisfied students, the institution should help to build student networks. Programs introducing students to their peers are important throughout the college years. Tutoring, academic advising, peer advising, and drop-in centers must be personalized so that students seeking help feel comfortable and valued rather than self-conscious and embarrassed.

An advising system that includes career planning needs to be provided so that Mexican Americans can see the relationship of their studies to possible vocations. In this study students reported confusion in what they were going to do with their degrees and unsure of what options would be open to them as graduates. By the time the students got to their junior year they reported greater satisfaction with their classes and professors, but until that time they reported a lot of problems asking for help and getting advice. Career information, placement and counseling services are important for students to be able to see options and plan for career paths. Differences in use of services by gender should anticipated and planned for.

The bureaucratic nature of the institution and its processes must be seen and understood as routines to be tolerated rather than threatening and insurmountable barriers to be avoided. Students must be taught early to both recognize and deal with bureaucracy at its most rudimentary level — such as financial aid application and renewal — as well as the system for dropping and adding classes. This would not only reduce academic and financial problems but also the frustrations.

Hispanic role models on campus, in both instructional and administrative positions, are important, but most critical to students is personal attention – it symbolizes self-worth. Programs and policies wherein students and instructors interact are important to personal recognition. Mexican-American studies programs and Spanish classes introduce "experiential relevance" and "cultural literacy" (Anderson, 1988; Haro, 1983) and that recognition is important in the development of the sense of self.

Implications for Future Research

This study revealed important findings about personal characteristics influencing student involvement and integration. The contributions of the involvement and the social integration of Mexican-American students studied was evident in the human support and commitment themes. Findings in this study correspond closely to the personal characteristics hypothesized by Tinto (1975, 1987) and Astin (1984, 1985), but it is evident those theories do not sufficiently define or address the characteristics of the Mexican-American educational experience. The factors of success emergent from the interview data need to be incorporated into measures in order to be compared to those theory bases.

Astin's theory of student involvement states that undergraduates who take advantage of the opportunities offered by the college environment succeed. Most students did not take advantage of those opportunities but still they remained in school. The "drive to achieve" indicated on the CIRP has been suggested by this study as a possible indicator of the personal factor of Mexican-American student commitment. Astin's (1984, 1985) theory of involvement was developed from a factor analysis of variables from the CIRP survey. Further examination of the role of the "drive to achieve" and related variables for Mexican-American students may contribute to an understanding of their involvement. Personal growth characteristics, such as commitment, play a role in the definition of achievement for Hispanics. Further work needs to be done to determine if some aspects of the commitment shown by students can be identified and enhanced in non-intrusive ways.

The construct of commitment is not manifest in other studies. This probably results from the fact that most studies are quantitative in nature and a construct like commitment may not show up until it has been identified through a qualitative study. Indicators of such constructs can be "built" from quantitative items. Pascarella (1983) expanded Tinto's model with the variable of "intention to withdraw." Similarly, variables identified in this study, including a measure of student commitment, could be added to path analytic tests of Tinto's (1975, 1987) model. The result could likewise contribute significantly to understanding persistence, particularly for Mexican-American students. This approach was also suggested by the work of Nora (1987).

As with any study, this one is not without its limitations. First, the students were self-selected: only those who took the CIRP survey and later returned the CSEQ surveys were able to be chosen. It can be

hypothesized that only the more conscientious students would return the surveys and that may be a factor in the persistence findings. Furthermore, more women than men returned the surveys, which again means they were self-selected. The study also did not interview students who dropped out. This lack was mitigated by the review of research on dropouts and by the fact that the successful students interviewed cannot all be said to have had a good collegiate experience. A study of committed hispanic students who leave college would contribute greatly to the picture of hispanic students sketched by herein. Finally, this study did not look at the persistence of other ethnic minorities. The work of Sedlacek (1983), Sedlacek and Brooks, (1976), and Anderson (1986), performed primarily with black student populations, indicates parallels which provide opportunities for further research.

Conclusion

This study reviewed the research on hispanic student dropout, and identified factors contributing to the success of 21 Mexican-American students. It suggested a profile of a successful Mexican-American student, but how do we know that the findings pertain to others beyond the subjects of this study? The world is a complicated place and we cannot expect the causes of departure or success to be the same everywhere; they will vary by individual and institutional characteristics. While many of the experiences discussed here would indeed be particular to minority students, in this case Mexican Americans, all students who persist in college may develop similar survival strategies and coping skills to deal with their experiences. Many of the findings of this study and the recommendations for empowerment are drawn from experiences that all students, not just Mexican Americans, may share. The commonalities discussed herein may be common to all. As one Mexican-American scholar (Rodriguez, 1982) so eloquently stated, "If my story is true, I trust it will resonate with significance for other lives."

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